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Daily Highlights

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MONDAY HIGHLIGHTS

* Secretary-General says Croatian parties must cooperate with UNCRO to justify continuation of Operation; stresses importance of cease-fire agreement, and safety and freedom of movement of United Nations personnel.

* Kenyan peace-keeper shot dead while trying to prevent hijacking of United Nations vehicle in Croatia's Sector South; Bosnian Serbs free Canadian detainee wounded in incident in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

* Donors Conference on Action Plan for Sarajevo to convene in Vienna on Wednesday; to review operations of Special Coordinator's Office and discuss prospects for future.

* Secretary-General recommends Security Council extend UNMOT mandate for six months, and approve stationing of team in northern Afghanistan; says Mission plays instrumental role in containing Tajik conflict.

* Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations begins biennial session at Headquarters; to consider applications for consultative status with Economic and Social Council.

* Committee on Peaceful Uses of Outer Space begins thirty-eighth session in Vienna; to focus on dangers posed by space debris.

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More than words are required from the Croatian parties to justify the continuation of the United Nations Confidence Restoration Operation in Croatia (UNCRO), according to Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali. In a report to the Security Council dated 9 June,

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he said the requests by the Croatian Government and the Croatian Serbs that UNCRO continue its deployments were positive developments. However, their cooperation on the ground had been unsatisfactory and UNCRO personnel had been put at risk.

The Secretary-General said both parties had exhibited a high degree of cynicism regarding their obligations under the cease-fire agreement of March 1994. The Croatian military offensive on 1 May showed what consequences ensued when conflicting parties forsook peaceful options and resorted to war. The Serb side must stop the hijacking of United Nations vehicles and the armed robbery and intimidation of UNCRO personnel.

Despite the operational difficulties, there appeared to be common ground between the parties that UNCRO should fulfil the tasks arising from the current cease-fire and economic agreements and from its humanitarian and human rights mandates, he continued. However, the redeployment of the mission by 30 June, as required under resolution 944 (1995), was no longer possible, and would likely take most of the present mandate period.

The Secretary-General said he would closely monitor the parties' cooperation with UNCRO. He would pay particular attention to the extent to which they complied with the cease-fire agreement, allowed UNCRO full freedom of movement, and protected its personnel from freedom and intimidation. Whether the Mission could fulfil its mandate depended ultimately on the parties' willingness to settle their differences at the negotiating table rather than on the battlefield.

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A Kenyan peace-keeper was killed yesterday while trying to prevent the hijacking of a United Nations vehicle in Croatia's Sector South, a spokesman for the Organization announced today. The vehicle was stopped by three men in Croatian Serb uniform while travelling from Knin to the United Nations headquarters in the Sector. The Kenyan soldier attempted to resist and was shot in the chest, while the driver -- a Czech civilian -- was wounded in the legs.

The spokesman said it was the first time a United Nations peace-keeper had been killed in such a hijacking. UNCRO launched an investigation into the incident, and demanded that the Croatian Serb authorities do likewise. There were two other hijackings in Sector South yesterday.

Meanwhile in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Bosnian Serbs released a Canadian peace-keeper from detention after he was wounded in the leg in crossfire between Bosnian Government and Bosnian Serb forces. The remaining 11 Canadian detainees being held by the Bosnian Serbs were later moved to a safer location in response to a request by the Canadian Battalion.

The Bosnian Serbs continued to detain or blockade a total of 144 United Nations personnel, and had now denied the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) access to them, the spokesman continued. Meanwhile, 86 Ukrainians were being blockaded by Bosnian Government forces in Gorazde.

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A Donors Conference on the Action Plan for Sarajevo will be convened in Vienna on Wednesday. The Conference will review the operations of the Office of the Special Coordinator for Sarajevo and discuss prospects for the future, including ongoing funding. It will be chaired by the Special Coordinator, William Eagleton.

The Conference will bring together representatives of the 28 major donors to the Action Plan, a Bosnian Government delegation, and United Nations, international organizations and non-governmental organizations involved in restoring essential services to the city. Some $94 million has been pledged to the Action Plan to date, $11 million of which has been pledged to the Trust Fund.

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The Security Council should extend the mandate of the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan (UNMOT) for six months to 16 December, according to the Secretary-General. In a report dated 10 June, he said that the situation in Tajikistan remained tense, and that the Mission's instrumental role in containing the conflict there had been recognized by the parties. The United Nations should respond positively to their request for assistance in implementing the current cease-fire, which had been extended for three months.

Noting that tension also remained high on the Tajik-Afghan border, the Secretary-General recommended that the Council approve the stationing of an UNMOT team in northern Afghanistan. That would allow for more direct liaison with the Tajik opposition and provide a base for conducting investigations in northern Afghanistan.

The Secretary-General stressed that no time should be lost in advancing the national reconciliation process. He had instructed his Special Envoy to explore with the parties ways to achieve progress on fundamental political and institutional issues. He appealed to the leaders of the Tajik Government and opposition to continue their direct dialogue. The parties themselves bore the primary responsibility for resolving their differences, and the Organization's continued involvement in Tajikistan depended on the manner in which they discharged that responsibility.

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The Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations today began its biennial session at Headquarters. Over the next two weeks, the Committee will consider the applications of more than 70 organizations seeking consultative status, or reclassification of their existing status, with the Economic and Social Council. It will also examine applications deferred from its 1993 session.

In addition, the Committee will consider recommendations by its working groups on its future work. Those recommendations -- that the Committee be enlarged and meet annually -- must be submitted to the Council for adoption.

Organizations can have three categories of status with the Economic and Social Council: Category I status allows them to submit written statements, be granted a hearing and propose agenda items; Category II status allows them to submit written statements and be granted a hearing; organizations on the Council's roster can make contributions to its work.

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The Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space today began its thirty-eighth session in Vienna. Between now and 23 June, the Committee will consider ways and means to maintain outer space for peaceful purposes and to ensure that the benefits of space exploration and research are made available to developing countries.

The Committee will also consider the question of accumulating debris in outer space. Under a proposed work plan for the next three years, it would focus on: gaining an understanding of the problem in 1996; modelling the space debris environment and assessing risk in 1997; and discussing mitigation options in 1998.

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